

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

All British information services were handled by the Public Relations Bureau, which was attached to the Embassy and constituted a branch of the Ministry of Information. Normally its head possessed the rank of First Secretary of the Embassy, and its ranking personnel also enjoyed diplomatic status.¹⁷ The Bureau was divided into a number of departments such as press, photographs, exhibitions, and films. Its press section was headed by Miss A. K. Lambton, press attache, a person with an excellent knowledge of the Persian language and politics. The Bureau was, itself, one of the most active departments of the British Embassy. It organized lectures and exhibitions. It released news to the local press and conducted a radio program. It also issued a newspaper, the *Tehran Daily News*, the only English-language paper appearing in Iran. It publicized primarily the Allied war effort and naturally stressed the British contribution. It also drew attention to the wealth and resources of the British Empire and the humane ways of British democracy. This propaganda was neither aggressive nor arrogant. No monopoly of achievement was claimed by Great Britain and even more than due share was given to other Allies, including Russia. Thus, for example, the exhibition window of the P.R.B. was more than once available to the Soviet Embassy for the display of war photographs from the Russian front. No direct criticism ever emanated from the P.R.B. with regard to any Ally. On the contrary, British propaganda endeavored to impress the Iranians with the unity and harmony prevailing in the Allied camp. The only villains were the Germans. Yet in the very stressing of British achievements and methods there was an implicit

suggestion that British ways were better than the Russian. The only section of the P.R.B. that was conducting a counteroffensive against Soviet propaganda was the Press Office. This office had to handle the nationalist papers of Iran with skill and care in order to influence their editorial policies. In this sector the British seemed to be as eager as the Russians to secure the support of as many newspapers as possible. It was through newspaper editorials that the British had the opportunity to reply to Soviet attacks and to make known their own views.

« The P.R.B. was headed during the war by a succession of five directors, of whom Major C. A. G. Savidge of the Indian Civil Service, Lt.-Col. D. P. S. Graham, and G. Wilfrid Seager held the longest terms of office.